

wordworks

The Weber State University Writing Center Journal

Fall, 1992

Editorially Speaking

Welcome to new students and professors. Welcome back to the already-university-initiated. The university makes us all a community and the Writing Center is a continuation of that community.

In Tim Hansel's book, *Through the Wilderness of Loneliness*. I came across a section which I thought was applicable to the Writing Center. It seemed so appropriate that I wanted to share it with our readers. He states:

"The next time you see geese flying south for the winter in a V-formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. There are four things that geese have to teach us.

One, they rotate their leadership. When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the formation and another goose flies point. (I'm sure one of the reasons leaders get lonely is because they are expected to stay in front all the time and they just plain wear out).

The second thing that they do is to create an upward air current for one another. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. Then, by flying in a V-formation, the whole flock gets 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own (Another reason for loneliness is that so many of us are all heading in our own directions rather than seeking to mobilize with each other in the same direction).

Third, when a goose gets sick or is wounded by a shot or falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he can fly again....

Finally, it's the geese in the back who honk, letting the leaders know that they're following and all is well."

Those who use the Writing Center have the notion that the assistants are the leaders. We are the "honorary experts," so to speak.

But as Hansel says, the position of expert is awfully lonely. It becomes a defensive position which honestly can't be maintained. Neither should it be maintained.

We may assume the role of leader but often, during a tutorial, that role is reversed. Happily, we who teach find ourselves being taught. Our title is assistant. We simply assist. We create "an uplift" for those following, creating a "greater flying range than if each . . . flew on its own."

Within our community, we are dependent upon one another. Never is a level reached wherein all is known. All learning is continuous and a collaborative effort. We need the reassuring "honk" from behind to let us know "all is well."

We appreciate the support we at the Writing Center have received. We hope our efforts support you.

--Sundy Watanabe

Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association/Writing Centers Association

On October 15-17 Weber State University will host the annual conference of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association. Site of the conference is the Ogden Park Hotel. Conjointly with the conference, the Rocky Mountain Writing Centers Association (RMWCA) will be holding its own meetings in the Dillon Room of the hotel. RMWCA sessions will feature speakers from throughout the intermountain west and Pacific coastal states.

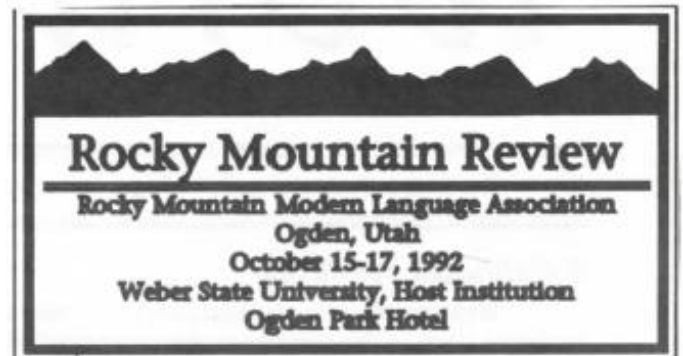
The RMWCA has a rich and varied conference program that addresses most of the key issues and challenges facing writing centers today. Topics Include: "Writing Across the Curriculum and Writing Centers," which considers how writing centers and WAC programs can collaborate to improve learning and writing campus-wide; "Writing Centers: Catalysts and Chaos Theories," which discusses how writing centers can catalyze better writing on campus and confront the forces of "chaos" that challenge them; "Writing Centers: Planning and Administration" and "Evaluation and Tutor Training," which explore computers, audiotapes, journals, and other tools and methods for tutor instruction.

On Saturday Joyce Kinkead, acting dean of Arts and Humanities at Utah State University, will address the annual luncheon of the RMWCA on the topic of "Defining Writing Centers." Dr. Kinkead is a founding editor of the *Writing Center Journal* and an expert on writing center administration. Her talk is particularly timely, as centers develop new roles in the mid-1990's, roles that involve us in an ongoing process of "defining" and redefining who we are.

On Friday morning at 8:30 our own Weber State panel will present on "Weber State Writing Center Programs: Reaching Out to the Campus and Community." The panel explores the diverse outreach and inreach programs we have created at Weber State. Elizabeth Thatcher will talk about the Writing Fellows program, Sundy Watanabe about *wordworks*, Heidi Hansen about administration and satellite centers, and Dennis Owens about the Writing Center Outreach program to Utah high schools. Diane Kulkarni, Writing Center coordinator, will chair the panel. It is rare for undergraduate writing assistants to present professional papers at a conference like this. Speakers are usually professors or graduate students. Our presence on the program testifies to the talents, vision, and enthusiasm of our presenters and to the strong, forward-looking program we have here at Weber State.

To all WSU Writing Center presenters and to all who assist with the conference in other ways, congratulations and thanks. I appreciate the efforts of all of you in sharing our activities with peers and colleagues around the western region. We have an exciting year ahead, and I can think of no better way to begin it than with the RMWCA program we have before us.

--Dr. John Schwiebert,
Writing Center Director



Let's Not, and Say We Did

by Diane Kulkarni

I have a Cinderella complex. Yet everybody at my house knows to clear the area when I reach for the flour sifter. You see, I'm a writer. Baking is not my thing. Most of my culinary endeavors end up as mystery food for the ducks at the city pond.

The problem boils down to this: since in writing I only produce something worthwhile after first creating chaos in several drafts and revisions, I apply the same principles to other activities. But with baking, there are no second chances. It's too matter of fact, not conducive to shortcuts. I should know that when I foresee disaster, I should just chuck the whole mixture into our compost heap, but I'm a hopeless optimist: I believe in happy endings.

But last week Annie asked me with big brown eyes and the "could you possibly say 'no' to a face like this?" expression. "Mom! It's my birthday. Everybody brings *homemade* stuff for their birthdays!"

So what could be so hard about four dozen devil's food cupcakes with a cream cheese/ chocolate chip surprise inside? Simple enough. Duncan Heinz has the mix; I have the oven.

Any homemaker in my neighborhood could accomplish this while canning tomatoes, putting up butter pickles and sewing lace trim on calico dresses for five daughters.

I'm not like them. I'm a commuting office manager, part-time student, and a free-lance writer. I measure absolutely everything by the amount of time I don't have left to do it in. It doesn't take much for me to feel too pressured to show up for the demands, much less for the shocks.

One look at my week's schedule should have set off warning bells about baking, but I started anyway, hoping to find an easy way to finish before my husband Jim came home and wondered why his dinner wasn't ready and asked who the lady was who was at our kitchen table reading aloud from the dietary laws of Leviticus.

"What's a Leviticus?" he asked, nodding to her and taking his tie off. His briefcase was bulging.

"This is Ellen. She missed today's Bible as Lit. class, so I'm helping her," I replied, struggling to mix chocolate chips into the cream cheese.

Maybe another egg will help it. I thought as Ellen shut the front door. *Let's see: two eggs, water, stir.* I set the mixture aside because the actual baking part would have to wait. Annie had an appointment with Doctor Bruce.

I explained this to Jim through the locked bathroom door. "What'd you say?" Jim called, the shower water muffling his words.

"I said: I'll be back later!"

So Annie and I hurried to the office, waited in the reception room, saw the doctor, left a throat culture and rushed downtown, prescription in hand. Meanwhile, while the pharmacist puttered for the pills, the hand on his clock swung wildly around its dial like the blade of a guillotine, and I heard my husband's distant stomach thundering, his blood pressure pounding, and I pictured the cupcake batter fermenting.

Times like this I yearn to wander off alone into the hills for a week, sleep late and over tea read a new book while the sun slips westward toward moonlight. Listening to crickets and smelling piney breezes would ease my memory of traffic, constant schedules and the compulsion to prioritize my "Things To Do" lists.

After arriving home the spoon stuck to my hand as the batter glopped heavily into paper cupcake cups, and I felt too tired to finish.

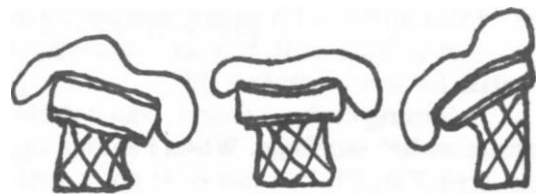
The stress suddenly reminded me of Sally's tenth birthday ice-cream cone cupcakes.

We had seen a picture of them in *Woman's Day*--frosted snowy white and sprinkled with little pink hearts. Sally begged me. I ignored my inner trepidation.

What could be simpler? I asked. As usual, I skimmed over the instructions: *two eggs, water, beat the batter, fill the cones, bake, cool and frost. Easy!* The first-filled batch stood in eyes-right rows on the foil-covered cookie sheet on the oven's middle rack.

When the timer went off, the goop looked raw. *Give it ten more minutes,* I told myself.

Nothing new happened, except the cones began to lean. Mental check: *Mix mixed, cones filled, tray installed, timer set. Still, there's something wrong.* The cups were slouching, sagging like old sweat socks bunched at the ankles. I checked the temperature dial and found the problem. *The oven is off!* I said out loud. *I never turned the darn thing on!* By now the cones were so soggy and deformed, it was too late to bake. I took three color snapshots of the tenth birthday disaster. For Sally's baby book, the bulging pink one with all her firsts.



Listen kids, I told my daughters, *next time you want something baked, let's just not and say we did.*

Like a bad rerun of Sally's birthday fiasco, baking these surprise cupcakes had also drained me. No, baking is definitely not like writing, where first drafts are acceptable, where tangents lead to insight, and where brilliant, undiscovered ideas surface only with many revisions.

When things get like this, the oven splattered black and the sink full of sticky bowls: when no sleeves-rolled-up friend offers to scrub, I need time out. And a heart-to-heart with Cinderella who was also expected to be perfect.

I think I know who wrote Cinderella's story. She had to have been overcommitted, the wife of an executive, and a working mother of teenagers who felt she had to be constantly on call. Then one day she had had it up to here! That's when she wrote the tale with the happily-ever-after ending.

I've got to write about this--later, I assured myself. *But first things first, this kitchen needs attention, and I have one more errand to run.*

Let Me See Your I.D.

by Charlie Cuthbertson

The concept of identification is one that is becoming increasingly (and somewhat disturbingly) important. It is no longer enough to just say "My name is George Bush, and I am your leader."

Now you actually have to prove it, and give several forms of plastic documentation before you can cash your checks. For this reason, (and I challenge anyone to find a better one) the wallet has become a vital part of personal existence.

I have always been fascinated with the wallet. My grandmother was fond of sending me a new one every Christmas, whether or not the one she had sent last year had actually worn out yet. This didn't bother me so much because she usually included money with the new wallets, and that, to me, was more useful than the wallet itself. I did, however, develop an odd obsession for filling all of the pockets and picture slots with anything I could find. Over the years, this obsession became an active quest for cards, photos, and scraps of paper--filling the bottomless chasms of the almighty wallet was delivering sacrifices to a hungry god. I think that if I had any money, I would use my wallet to hold that, but as it turned out I had to settle for more creative filler.

Joining clubs, I found, was a great way to acquire wallet stuffings. When I signed up for the Star Trek Fan Club, I not only got a real plastic membership card (complete with an official-looking 9-digit ID number), but an unflattering photo of William Shatner (in his pre-toupee days) that was just the right size for billfold display. Eventually, I had enough photos to rival any proud parent, and the best part about it was that nearly everyone could recognize the people in my photos and were not, at least immediately, bored by them.

My proudest moment came when I was accepted into the Willy Wonka Fun Club. The membership requirements were somewhat strict (I had to eat my way through twenty boxes of Gobstoppers and send in the UPC code from each one), but once I became a member, I received not one, but three separate ID cards. Perhaps the most impressive was the card for the Candy Tasting Team which enabled me to get free samples of Willy Wonka candy and send in a survey sheet (sort of like the ones you find at fast-food emporiums) telling Mr. Wonka what I thought of his confections.

This inspired me to begin amassing restaurant discount cards which were handy for relieving any guilt I might feel at eating out too often. I could also reflect on how much money I was saving for future bypass surgery and dietary consulting.

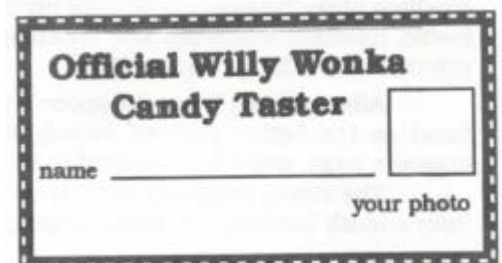
When I graduated from high school, I was sure to get a wallet-sized reproduction of my diploma. It was only later that I realized what a perfect symbol the small, cheap, creased plastic certificate was of my academic learning and instruction in those years.

Eventually I came to the point where I would make up my own cards and carry them around to see if I could fool people with them. Phony press credentials were always good to have at accident sites or celebrity appearances. I also had a card that identified me as a scientific and technical advisor for a bogus United Nations taskforce.

Not surprisingly, as my haphazard collection grew, my wallets tended to fall apart at rates that fell short of the annual Christmas renewal from Grandmother. But the thought of "cleaning out" my prized identification cards and Leonard Nimoy pictures in favour of room for such trivial items as licenses, credit cards, and social security numbers was an abhorrent one to me. I didn't see the use of additional identification, and I still don't. In the unlikely event that I lose my face in a random skateboarding accident or forget who I am due to nuclear fallout from Nevada, I figure someone can always look at my Candy Taster Card and find out who I am. Better yet, if my wallet gets stolen, I'll never have to worry about someone using my Star Trek ID number to finance an illegal cross-country shopping spree.

My wallet is not just a pouch formed from the skin of an unsuspecting bovine to hold my dirty money. It is an expression of who I am and what I have become and what I strive to be. It is a part of me, and not just because I happen to sit on it all day.

And I have more fun trying to cash a check than most people have in a lifetime of credit receipts.



Women Do This

The day I sneezed for hours,
from pulling pricker weed and fuzz-ball spores
out of the tan dry earth
in the front side yard
where everyone sees,
I seethed
"This is the last time I'll weed dirt!"

so

I stormed into Dillworth's and
splurged fifty six dollars and ninety nine cents
on five Rose of Sharons

(my sister's name is Sharon)

shy pink romance amid practical green and
also five burnt-red mums
the only color they had in
quantity enough to fill the front
side plot.

so

after I filled the car trunk
I simmered back home
and between kleenexes
grunted shovelfulls of dirt

potato bugs

daddy-long-legs and plenty of worms,

heaved a hose from its knot against the railing

over the shoulder and under the arm and

marched to muddy up ten fertilized holes.

Planted them all in an hour flat.

But

I was one holt short of symmetry.

so

I slammed the car door
wrenched head and wheel and
Round Two commenced
back at Dillworth's store.

I supplicated the Lord
for the one last rust mum
sitting awkwardly

tight budded

in the red wagon bed and
chortled as

I snatched it and ran to the counter
another two fifty, but what the heck.

Pretty heady accomplishment if you ask me,
woman over nature and all that stuff.

Just wait till they bloom.

But

now it's fall and

I shrug, concede a smile. There are
five Rose of Sharons

(my older sister)

knowing pink, laughing amid protective green and
six full blooming chrysanthemums--only
one of them's purple.

Sundy Watanabe

"One Wonderful Line"

A Response From Walt Whitman:

The people sang the lyrics of my music. Their lament rose in chorus with the winds and was echoed by all the elements of nature.

-Dianne DeSerisy

Greek Doc

"Oh, open bigger!" he coaxes as the toddler starts to gag and choke on the bitter tasting stick and starts wailing. "I'm sorry, Sweetheart."

-Susan Skordos

Feminine Identity: Principles for Counseling Women

Gender is the initial and most permanent of all meanings attached to human beings.

-Mark Love

Censorship: Violation of the First Amendment

Judgment and condemnation of what other people have to say is easily and often done.

-Jennifer Hasrattan

A Dying Process

When my dad went to see her today, she looked up at him with questioning, childlike eyes and asked, "Can't you make me better?"

-Rachelle Clark

Historical Criticism: The Unavoidable Counterpart of All Criticism

The Historical Critic attempts to restore past literature to its original condition (as much as possible) by giving the reader historical and sociological background that will make the text more meaningful, similar to the complete text that was enjoyed by readers in the author's time period.

-Kathi Nichols

Braving the Buckskin

A thin strip of blue sky was sun visible far above, where the walls ended and the other world began.

-Karen M. Sutphin

Imperative Exposure

The characters of Faulkner's *Absalom*.
Absalom!, especially Rosa Coldfield, show
how war--civil war--can actually bludgeon
the future to extinction, stabbing and
clubbing people into a living death.

-Charlie Cuthbertson

Escape to Freedom

I remember my mother telling us
we were just playing a game with
these men. that the bullets were
not real and could not hurt us if
we just stayed close to her and
kept our heads down.

-Quynh-Thu Hang)

Vengeance for a Non-Jumping Frog (With Apologies to Clemens)

Next thing ya know, Smiley's a walkin' through town with that frog (who wasn't
feelin' too good yet), his mangy dog that he had stuffed at one of them taxidermy
fellers--always had a trail of sawdust wherever he was dragged--and his ol' yaller,
one-eyed cow that didn't have no tail, only jest a short stump like a bannanner, an' a
few odd trappins hangin' off the back.

--Steve Butterweck

Snow

Fairy powder falls,
Transforming grey flannel to
White velvet in one magic
Poof.

-Emma Dibble

The Parables and Sym- bolism of William Faulkner's "Old Man"

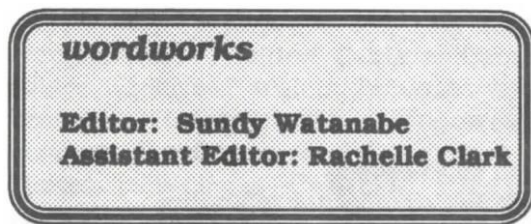
Ironically, suddenly being
completely deserted was
much easier to bear than
the anguish of being
misunderstood.

-Anne L. Robbins

Invitation to a Wedding

"Besides, who the hell has a name like Shirley?
Shirley didn't learn how to drive a stick shift in his '73
Chevy, or watch his face contort in pain as he tried,
for a third time, to explain what a fourth down was."

--Carina Woodruff



Writing Center Hours

Monday-Friday	8:30-11:15 a.m.	SS042
	11:30-2:30 p.m.	WB 111
Saturday	9:30-2:30 p.m.	SS 040 (computer lab tutoring area)

Dr. John Schwiebert, Writing Center Director 626-6289
Diane Kulkarni, Writing Center Coordinator 626-6463

Statement of Purpose: The Writing Center

Dr. John Schwiebert, Director

Staffed by undergraduate students (writing assistants), the Writing Center is a unique place where W.S.U. students can receive feedback on their writing in a comfortable, non-threatening environment. The Center seeks to help all students, of all levels of writing ability, at any stage of the writing process. Trained writing assistants ask questions, listen, demonstrate techniques of invention, drafting, and revising, and provide an attentive and challenging audience for the student writer. Rather than "fixing" or proofreading papers, we model strategies so that students can help themselves to become better writers. In this way, the Center fosters independent thinking, promotes a collaborative spirit, and improves intellectual growth and writing ability.